

"Life Speaks More Than Just Words"

When we listen to people in conflict, their stories can be very different. In such situations, I tend to trust the person who leads a trustworthy life. The credibility of words is proven by one's life.

Paul Johnson's book, "Intellectuals," reveals the private lives of modern thinkers. Figures like Enlightenment thinker Jean-Jacques Rousseau, novelist Hemingway, existential philosopher Sartre, and playwright Ibsen are featured. Johnson shows, based on published records, how these individuals often lived lives that contradicted their own theories and philosophies.

For example, Karl Marx, who wrote "Das Kapital" and laid the foundation for communism, criticized the government as an exploitative tool while living on government subsidies. He condemned the bourgeoisie for exploiting workers, yet he exploited his maid by not paying her for months.

Why did these intellectuals live such contradictory lives? Because the theories they advocated were not grounded in truth. They presented untested ideas as if they were true. Consequently, communism collapsed in less than a century.

The only person whose teachings and life were perfectly aligned was Jesus Christ. When we reflect on His life in light of His teachings, we find no flaw or contradiction. This is why we can trust that His words are true. Moreover, when we live according to His words, we experience happiness, confirming the truth of His teachings.

Theories and principles must be validated by life. Therefore, if you seek business advice, look to those who have succeeded in business. If you need health advice, seek out healthy individuals. When facing marital issues, seek advice from happy couples. For guidance on raising children, turn to those who have successfully raised their own.

On the other hand, there are those who suffer losses by listening to people who have not succeeded. Taking advice from someone who has failed in business can lead to business failure. Listening to someone with an unhappy marriage can worsen your own marital relations. Paying attention to the words of a discontented church member can distance you from your faith.

Before following any ideology or philosophy, observe the life of the person advocating it. Before listening to enticing words, examine the life of the person speaking them. Jesus said, "By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:16).

